



Moretonhampstead History Society

Newsletter

November 2007

October Meeting:

October saw our Annual General Meeting, which was attended by some 25 members.

Professor Ian Mercer kindly agreed to remain as President, and he reminded us that two long-standing and highly dedicated members had died during the past year – Alison Simkins and Peter Collier.

The existing committee was re-elected with no new members willing to stand: Chair – Dr Ian Mortimer; Treasurer – Jeanette Webster; Programme Secretary – Wendy Coombes; Newsletter Editor – Chris Pilkington; Secretary – Alan Payne; Committee members – Edward Hobson and Edward Pike. Eleanor Lockett and June Tozer volunteered to take over the refreshments, for which we are very grateful. We then played, or tried to play, a game of historical bingo devised by Ian. To our great relief, one team actually managed to complete a whole line. I don't know how they did it, but well done! - Wendy Coombes

About Listed Buildings:

The recent tragic fire in Ford Street has raised questions about the criteria for listing buildings of Special Architectural Interest, and about the different grades of listing and what the grading system means.

There are **three** grades of listed buildings:

Grade I

These are buildings of exceptional interest and only about 2% of listed buildings are in this grade. The only Grade I buildings in the parish of Moretonhampstead are St Andrews Church and the Almshouses. English Heritage are statutorily required to be consulted on any works to Grade I buildings. Both English Heritage and the local planning authority will take a strict line on any proposed alterations.

Grade II*

These are particularly important buildings and account for 4% of the total stock of listed buildings. As with Grade I buildings, English Heritage will have to be involved in any alterations. Poltimore House which I help to look after is Grade II* and as I have found out, English Heritage have been more than generous and helpful in our efforts to save this threatened building. The buildings which were destroyed in Ford Street were collectively listed as Grade II* but as more of the structure of the building was revealed during the demolition process, it did appear that such status is open to question. The other II* buildings in the parish are Pitt House, Mearsdon Manor, Hatherley (Sloncombe) and Lowton Farm.

Grade II

These are buildings of special interest and it is Government policy that every effort should be made to save them and to prevent alterations which do not respect their historic and architectural integrity. These are, of course, the majority of listed buildings and it is the local planning authority who, in addition to the owners, have the responsibility of safeguarding them. There are roughly one hundred Grade II listed items in the parish, including some oddities such as ash houses, certain tombstones, and old railings. All buildings built before 1700 which survive in anything like their original condition should be listed. Most buildings built between 1700 and 1840 are listed, though selection is necessary. Between 1840 and 1914, only buildings of definite quality and character are listed. Between 1914 and 1939, only selected buildings of high quality are listed. After 1939, a building has to be of exceptional quality and perhaps show technological innovation to be listed.

Alan Payne.

November Meeting:

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday 21st November, when John Ridson will give us an illustrated talk on:

The History, Geography, Flora and Fauna of the Dart

Expect some excellent colour photography! As usual, we meet in the Community Club at 7.30 pm.

Non members of the Society are very welcome to join us for a donation of £2 payable at the door.

Old Guides to Moretonhampstead:

In previous issues of the Newsletter, I have written about a Guide to the Town published in 1968. I have now been loaned 2 much older guides. One of them can be easily dated as being published in either 1928 or early 1929 as it advertises the **future** opening of the Manor House Hotel in August 1929, by The Great Western Railway!

More on these later, my thanks go to Ruby Collier who owns them.

Picture Puzzle:



This unusual structure is located in this area, can anyone guess what its function was, and additionally what is the unique accolade bestowed upon it?

I will be simply amazed if anyone gets this one!

My thanks go to Paul Dodd for sending me the photograph. If you know Paul, his former occupation may give you a clue!

Anyone can contribute; please send articles to: christopher.pilkington@tesco.net